A

SERMON,

BY

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(Many Years Dissenting Minister at Hull.)

"The enquiry of a well regulated spirit, to the last, is,' "Lord what wouldst "thou have me do? While any of my powers remain, however blunted, "however impaired, to whom shall I dedicate the poor remains? Enfeebled, "exhausted as I am, is there no one respect in which I can yet glorify God, "or be useful to my fellow creatures?"

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INTRODUCTION.

As it is now near sixteen years, since my dear parent, the author of this discourse, paid the last debt to nature, a question may arise, why suffer this sermon to lie so long silent? I answer in the words of Solomon "There is a time for all things." There are flowers which present us with their pleasing bloom, and sweet fragrance, every year; but there are others that only afford us those delights once in seven years; and one, only in an hundred years. Therefore Nature, Providence, and the word of God, proclaim this truth of the wise man, "There is a time for all things." Very little need be said to prove this to be a time of general distress, and alarm, from the decay of trade, and the very great advance in taxes. The times may require it but every man in trade, with a family, feels its force and drops under it, as a burden too weighty for him. Where then shall he look for help and support? can he

he with confidence look on an arm of flesh? can he view an open enemy attempting to take his little all, by force from him, and his helpless wife. with the dear pledges of their mutual love, plunged into extreme distress? obliged by an unfeeling, armed mob to forsake their peaceful dwelling, once the delight and joy of every thing dear to them in this vale of tears. Where can every army that takes the field in defence of this country, at this time of general distress, better look to, then with David to his God? Prompted by such motives, and a value for my dear deceased sire, this being the only sermon he left in long hand (his usual practice being to write in short hand). Trusting that the public will deem it unnecessary to regard the hand from which they receive this token of filial esteem; and desirous to [redacted] the closet of the mournful, from any of the cases mentioned in this discourse, I remain,

The Publics humble servant,

I. B.

PSALM LVI. 3.

What time I am afraid I will trust in Thee.

IN this state of weakness, uncertainty, mutability, and danger, the greateſt part of mankind are very ſubject to fear: To abounding, dejecting, painful, yea tormenting fears. To be provided then with an effectual help againſt ſuch fears, muſt be very neceſſary, very deſireable, and of no little uſe and benefit. This the text presents us with. "What time I am afraid, I will trust in Thee." David, whoſe words theſe are, tho' a man of great courage and a large stock of grace, yet was not at times without his fears. Tho' a man after God's own heart, and a favourite of Heaven, yet was oft times in ſuch circumſtances, as tend to generate fear. And notwithstanding all his courage and all his grace, found his fears rising, and sometimes prevailing.

What fear is, you all know. You find it stirring and working upon this and the other occasion,

and that cannot but bring you better acquainted with it, than any scholastick definition. So that when the Psalmist says, as in the text, "What time I am afraid," you take in his sense: you apprehend his meaning. It would be well if as much could be said with respect to the other part: Or his resolved practice under his fears. But however desireable this may be, yet too evident it is, that trust in God does not keep pace with fear; or go hand in hand with this; or that there are none who when afraid but trust in God.

Catholicons in physick, universal sovereign medicines, proper in all cases and for every one, are justly to be suspected; are seldom regarded or valued but by the ignorant and credulous. But here is a real catholicon, a recipe which deserves the notice and use of the most knowing and the wisest. Nothing in all the world so universally, so extensively serviceable as trust in God. This is fit for all persons under all their fears. "What time I am afraid I will trust in Thee." A little attention to the common meaning of the word, trust, or what is intended when you are bid to trust in this or the other person. Or to what passes in your own minds when you do trust in one or another, will help you to conceive what it is to

trust

trust in God. But then be it observed, that, whatever invites or encourages our trust in this, or that creature, is, in a boundless degree and measure, in God, be it a readiness to succour, relief and help; or power and ability; or truth and veracity. And therefore on this account or upon the account of God's All-sufficiency, He is to be trusted in in another manner than we sould trust in any other, and may, and should be trusted in such cases as no creature whatever should be trusted in; or when it may altogether be out of the power of any creature to help us.

'Tis the office and work of the Blessed Spirit to form sinful men to this trust. 'Tis his work to enlighten them in the vanity of all other trusts, and to bring them off from all other dependencies. To enlighten them in the divine suitableness and bring them to a becoming confidence in him. trust in God will evidence itself by seeking to him; and is very much confirmed and strengthened by fervent, constant prayer.

'Tis not for sinners to trust in God but in and thro' Christ. And it becomes such ever to trust in God with humility. We should not weary in trusting in God, but should do it constantly and

 patiently.

patiently. Should be found in the way of Duty; not be driven to any indirect means. Or be discouraged through any difficulties or dark appearances.

But what I have principally in view is, to mention some of those fearing times in which especially we should trust in God. And they are as follows,

A time of conviction.
A time of desertion.
A time of temptation.
A time of extraordinary business.
A time of affliction.
A time of danger to ourselves or friends.
A time of some extraordinary duties.
A time of national distress and trouble.
A time of the church's distress and danger.
A time of approaching death.

I. A time of conviction is a fearing time. 'Tis for a lamentation that conviction work is no more common or general. That the Holy Spirit as to his convincing influences is so much withdrawn. And that consequently we meet but with few that are pricked to the heart, or that have a wounded conscience. That see and lament their guilt and pollution, their misery and danger. And

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are crying out, "What shall we do to be saved."

But now usually where ever this is the case, or as soon as any fall under convictions of sin, presently fear begins to stir and work. Disheartening fears start up, abound, and are ever uppermost, to the no small encrease of their affliction and trouble.

They see themselves lost and undone, and are afraid lest ever they be saved. Their sins stare them in the face. And they are afraid that they cannot, will not be pardoned. They see that God is justly angry with them, and are full of fears lest his anger should never be turned away from them. How common is it for such, to express themselves after this manner. I am afraid my case is desperate. That my sins will never be forgiven, being so many and so great. Yes, I am too great a sinner to entertain any hope. There is no mercy I fear for me. It is not seldom that such fear that they have committed the unpardonable sin. Such are the apprehensions and such the language oft times of convinced sinners. Well now at such a time, as it is especially necessary, so it is fit and proper, to trust in God. However great really your guilt may be, or whatever terrifying apprehensions you may have of it, you should trust

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in God. Not in God indeed absolutely considered (that will afford no relief), but in God as in Christ. "The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him, "in them that hope in his mercy*." You mistake the end of the spirit in your convictions. This is not to drive you to despair and set you at further distance from God, but to drive you out of yourself and bring you to Him. You are convinced, that, seeing your danger, you may be made to flee to Christ.

Though persons are very prone to think otherwise, yet it is never more their duty, to trust in God, than when under the most humbling, debasing, convictions of sin. Such a sight and sense of sin as persons have at this time, instead of making less worthy of Christ, is the only recommendation (if I may say so) to Christ.

Away then, O thou awakened, convinced soul, away, I say, with these unbelieving, very distressing, and almost overwhelming fears. There is help for you in Christ, and in the mercy of God through Christ. Whatever your sins have been, or are, the blood of Christ can cleanse from all, the mercy of God is abundant enough to pardon all.

"Come,

* Psalm cxlvii.——11.

"Come now, and let us reason together, saith "the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall "be white as snow; though they be red like "crimson, they shall be as Wool*."

To trust in God is the only way, that with safety to yourself or honour to God, you can take in your present condition. Are you afraid then through convictions of sin? O trust in God.

II. As a time of conviction, so a time of desertion, is another fearing time. Most certain it is that this is a trial which the true christian may meet with; it may be, the present uncomfortable experience of some, witnesseth to this. Certain it is, that as God's people do sometimes enjoy his special gracious presence and the light of his countenance: So at other times they may walk in darkness, be under the divine withdrawings and the hidings of God's face. Some of you, I trust, experimentally know, the peace, the comfort, the consolation and joy, which God's sensible presence affords. How refreshing, enlivening, strengthening, and delightful it is to walk in the light of his countenance. If in this way God speak peace, what then can give trouble. The Christian then can glory

* Isaiah i.——18.

glory in tribulation. At such a time believers see their relation to God; their union with Christ; their interest in the covenant, and their title to life clear. And thus doubts are scattered, fears are silenced, and they are filled with hope through the God of hope. With the Psalmist they say, their mountain stands strong, and with the spouse, "My Beloved is mine and I am his."

But under desertion, how much otherwise is it with the christian. If God withdraw, whether it be for trial, or by way of correction for sin, what trouble does this often produce. Thou didst hide thy face and I was troubled. Though it is not to be justified, and should not be indulged, yet how many christians, at such times are even overpowered with the most heart aching fears.

They are afraid that as the gracious presence of God is at this time denied them, that they shall never enjoy it any more. Having lost the light of his countenance, they are afraid, they have no interest in his love. That because his face is not towards them, that his heart is turned against them. That their way is hid from the Lord, and their judgement passed over from their God. Because God is departed for a short moment, they

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are afraid He will never return. They fear that all former experiences were no other than delusion. That they have been deceiving themselves with false hopes.

Is not the case thus, christians? And are not such fears very distressing? Well now, at such a fearing time as this, it is especially proper, that we trust in God. In such circumstances, and at such a season, God should be trusted in, to remember and fulfil his promise, that though "In a little wrath "for a moment, he may hide his face, yet that he "will have mercy upon his People*."

We should cleave to God, and resolve though he slay us, we will trust in him. We should trust in his unchangeableness, who is the same, yesterday, to day, and for evermore. We should trust in his covenant which is everlasting, and in the promises which are all yea and amen in Christ Jesus.

"Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that "obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh "in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in "the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God†."

An example of this we have. "And I will "wait

* Isaiah liv.——8. † Isaiah l.——10.

" wait upon the Lord, that hideth his face from " the house of Jacob*."

III. A time of temptation is such another time. The prince of the power of the air is the author of many temptations in the children of men. It is true satan is in God's chain, and he cannot tempt without his permission. But sometimes it pleases God to let him loose as it were upon the children of men. Yea upon his own people. " Simon, Simon, " satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift " you as wheat†." And such is satan's enmity to christians, such is his enmity to their peace and comfort, as well as final happiness, that having got permission, he soon falls foul on this and the other poor soul, and begins to buffet him. Did I say, buffet! yea to worry and rend him with his temptations. What the temptations of satan may be, is perhaps out of the power of any fully to declare; but with respect to number, they may be very many; in point of cunning and subtility, they are wiles; and as to the painful, dangerous, and destructive nature of them, they are fiery darts. Now it may be he fills the mind with horrid thoughts of God; or tempts the christian to blaspheme God and Christ. To reject the scriptures; to forego the truth; to throw off all religion, or to be negligent

* Isaiah viii.——17. † Luke xxii.——31.

ligent and careless. Nay with respect to persons under this or that trouble, it is not seldom that he tempts such to put an end to their troubles by putting an end to their lives. The apostle tells us, that, our "Adversary, the devil, goes about as a roaring "lion, seeking whom he may devour*." Happy the christian who is not in some such way, set upon by satan. An exemption indeed from his temptations none can promise themselves. For did he tempt Christ and will he let alone any of his disciples? but in a time of temptation, how do fears abound: I fear, says the tempted soul, I am none of God's children, because I am thus tempted; I fear I shall yield to and be overcome of these temptations; that I shall one day fall by the hand of these enemies. Well, under this fearing time nothing more proper than to trust in God. "No temptation hath overtaken you, but such as is "common to man: and God is faithful, who will not "suffer you to be tempted above what you are able "to bear†."

It is promised that God shall bruise satan under the feet of his people shortly; trust in the promise, and in God through the promise. Fly to the shadow of his wings. He can preserve you from, or

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* I Peter v.——8. † I Corinthians x.——13.

deliver you out, of the snare of the fowler. Act faith upon Christ (the blessed seed of the woman) for wisdom to discern, for strength to withstand, satan and all his temptations. Resist the devil stedfast in the faith. Stedfastly adhering to the truth. Stedfastly trusting in God. Thus the apostle exhorts, when he says, "Above all, taking "the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to "quench all the fiery darts of the wicked*."

IV. Times of extraordinary business, are often fearing times, and in these also it is especially good to trust in God. You have matters of weight and importance in hand, and cannot fully resolve what to do; are afraid to proceed, or come to this or that determination, lest it should be wrong, and your interest be prejudiced thereby. Well, in such a situation, you can do nothing better than to trust in God. Ask counsel of him. Commit your way to him. Thus did Jehoshaphat and the congregation of Judah and Jerusalem. We know not what to do, but our eyes are upon Thee. Another such like example we have, "That we might afflict ourselves before our God, "to seek of him a right way for us, and for our "little ones, and for all our substance†."

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* Ephesians vi.——16. † Ezra viii.——21.

You have occasion, it may be, of applying to great ones; you have some favour to ask, and are afraid how you may succeed; what reception you may meet with. Well, trust in God. The hearts of all are in his hands. Look to him in the first place, to incline the hearts of such to whom you may apply in your favour. Imitate Nehemiah, who said, "O Lord, I beseech thee let now thine "eyes be attentive to the prayer of thy servant, who "desires to fear thy name. And prosper the way of "thy servant this day, and grant him mercy in the "sight of this man; for I was the king's cupbearer*." Or, it may be, you have affairs depending in a legal way; and though as you may apprehend, justice and equity are on your side; yet such are the uncertainties (I will not say glorious, but distressing uncertainties) of the law; and such the proneness of men to prevaricate, and even swear falsely, that you cannot but have your fears as to the issue. Well, trust in God. "For thou hast maintained "my right and my cause; thou sattest in the throne "judging right†".

V. A time of affliction; whether bodily illness or trouble in our affairs, is another fearing time. Man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upwards. What an almost countless number of diseases are these

* Nehemiah i.——11. † Psalm ix.——4.

these bodies subject to, through sin. And not a less number of civil troubles are we liable to. Now when the health of a person is broke in upon; when disorders, whether of a painful or languishing nature invade the body; when the flesh declines, and the beauty is made to consume away as a moth; when persons seem to be hastening to their end, how often are they filled with distressing fears. How common is it for such to fear, that they shall never get through the distemper, never be healed of it, or recovered out of it. Nay sometimes their fears extend further, and have for their object, their state after death. Their eternal state. They feel death, as they think, coming on, and are sore afraid that they are not ready to die. Well, in such a time, we should trust in God. All our times are in his hands, diseases are his servants, and such as are very dear to him are exercised not a little with them. "Lord, behold, he "whom thou lovest is sick*."

Timothy, though he had unfeigned faith dwelling in him, was a valetudinarian; had his frequent infirmities. Gaius had a very crazy constitution, though he had an healthy soul. "Beloved, I wish "above all things, that thou mayest prosper and "be in health, even as thy soul prospereth."

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* John xi.——3

At such a time, and in such circumstances, God should be trusted in, to sanctify the afflictions; to make the ill health of the body promote the better health of the soul; prevailing bodily distempers the means of weakening and curing soul disorders; that by these iniquities may be purged out and sin taken away. Look to God when in these circumstances, to mitigate your pains, to rebuke disorders, to support your spirits, to restore strength and appetite, but, above all, to help you to be resigned to his will, and fully prepared for it.

And, as a time of sickness, so a time of outward trouble is a fearing time. All are liable to various disappointments, vexations, and losses. God's dearest children may be reduced to great straits and difficulties, and if the world frowns, if things go cross and adverse, fears are apt to stir and rise, to abound and prevail. Persons in trouble, even good people, are too apt to yield to dismaying, desponding, fears; instead of believing they shall see the goodness of God in the land of the living, they fear the contrary; because they cannot see how, they fear they shall never get through their troubles; that, because they cannot see to the end of them, that there will be no end to them. And thus their hearts become

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like wax, and are ready to melt within them. Their hands are weakened, and they sit down disconsolate and overwhelmed. Now it would be far better in such circumstances to do as David did, viz. encourage ourselves in the Lord our God. Trust in God to sanctify to you the present situation of things. To let you see why he hath a controversy with you in this providence. That the great end of such dispensations may be answered; and that then you may be smiled upon in a providential way, and experience a favourable turn. But, if otherwise, that you may have an assured interest in spiritual blessings; and by these outward troubles be made to desire, seek, and value, spiritual blessings the more.

VI. Another fearing time is, when under apprehensions of danger to ourselves or friends. It may be, the place of your abode is under a divine visitation. Some pestilential disease or another may be stirring; and as you are in danger of taking the infection, so you have many fears on that account. Well, trust in God. He can either preserve you from what you fear, and may be in danger of, or if he suffer it to overtake you, can carry you through it, and make it work for good. "Surely He shall deliver thee from the snare of

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" the fowler and from the noisome pestilence. He " shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his " wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy " shield and buckler. Thou shalt not be afraid " for the terror by night: nor for the arrow that " flieth by day: nor for the pestilence that walketh " in darkness: nor for the destruction that wasteth " at noon day." Or it may be, that men are risen up against you; and these, subtle, powerful, malicious and implacable; and you are ready to fear upon their account. Or it may be, you are in the midst of enemies, who are ready to devour and swallow you up. Well, trust in God. This was directly the case with the Psalmist. " Be merciful " unto me, O, God, for man would swallow me up: " he fighting daily oppresseth me. Mine enemies " would daily swallow me up: for they be many " that fight against me, O, thou most high*." Then follows the text. " What time I am afraid " I will trust in Thee."

The wrath of man praiseth God, and the remainder of wrath he restrains. As none can help, so none can hurt without God. " It is in the " power of my hand to do you hurt; said Laban " to Jacob, but the God of your father spake " unto me yesternight, saying, take thou heed,

* Psalm lvi.——1, 2.

" tha thou speak not to Jacob, either good or " bad*."

Or it may be your situation in point of dwelling is somewhat dangerous; you may live alone; or in this or that dangerous situation; and may sometimes be apt to fear on that account. Well, trust in God. He can preserve you and make you to dwell in safety. " And thou shalt dwell in safety†."

Or it may be, business or health's sake call you much abroad, to journey or travel either by land or water; and fears as to this and the other danger, are apt to rise, and disturb and distress your mind. Trust in God to keep you, to put you under the protection of his holy angels; " He shall give his " angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy " ways‡."

VII. Many times when persons are coming forward in religion, or have this and the other religious service or holy ordinance before them, they are ready to fear. How common is it for persons when they are coming into church-membership, to be very much exercised, yea, bowed down with excessive fear. And how often are christians beset with abounding fears, when they are about to approach the table of the Lord. A fear of caution,

*Genesis xxxi.—29. † Job xi.—18. ‡Psalm xci.—11.

tion, a holy gracious fear is at all times becoming, and especially at the seasons referred to; but such a fear is quite different from this sinful, slavish, unbelieving, fear, which fills, and sinks, and depresses many, before, and when, they come up to that ordinance, and robs them of the benefit and comfort, they might otherwise receive. Against this fear we ſhould trust in God. "Wherefore are "ye fearful, O ye of little faith." Trust in God to subdue these fears; to deliver you from them; to take away this spirit of fear, and to give you a spirit of power, of love, and a sound mind. Remember that he has enjoined his ministers to say unto them that are of a fearful heart, "Be strong, "fear not*," yea, that he himself says to his people to every one of them, "Fear thou not, For "I am with thee†."

VIII. A time of national distress and trouble, is another fearing time, under which it is most proper to trust in God. Kingdoms and nations are liable to distress and trouble, as well as private persons or individuals. They may fall into such circumstances as directly tend to stir up fear; nay to fill with dismay and terror. Such was the case with Israel and Judah, "And these are the words "that the Lord spake concerning Israel, and "concerning Judah. For thus saith the Lord,

* Isaiah xxxv.——4. † Isaiah xli.——10.

"We have heard a voice of trembling, of fear,
"and not of peace. Ask ye now, and see whe-
"ther a man doth travail with child? Wherefore
"do I see every man with his hands upon his loins,
"as a woman in travail, and all faces are turned
"into paleness? Alass! for that day is great, so
"that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's
"trouble; but he shall be saved out of it*."

When the honour and glory of a nation are at a low ebb, when a nation is involved in war, however necessary and just, especially if it be engaged in a ruinous and destructive war. If public undertakings miscarry; and the most promising schemes and attempts prove abortive; when the trade of a nation is evidently upon the decline, and very valuable branches of it in great danger of being lost. When a nation is not only in a state of war, but invaded or like to be invaded by a powerful enemy; and the sword with all its evil attendants is brought home to their own towns and cities; as when Sennacherib, king of Assyria came up against Judah and Jerusalem, when civil war (the worst of all wars) takes place in and among a people, and they become divided among themselves; these and such like are times of national trouble, and the occasions of great and manifold fears. "For the divisions of Reuben there were great

* Jeremiah xxx.——4, 5, 6, 7.

great thoughts of heart*." Well, nothing more proper at such a time than to trust in God. His providential government extends to kingdoms and nations, as well as individuals; and he equally rules over one as the other. As the latter are not beneath his notice so the former are not above or beyond his controul. "It is through him that nations prosper; become great and are established, "and his word can pluck them up†."

In God then should we trust at such times. To consider that God sitteth upon the floods, that he sitteth king for ever. And to act as such a consideration well followed and rightly improved, will direct and lead to; will at least check and weaken if not drive away or prevent all unbecoming fear, all distracting, unhinging, tormenting fear. God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will we not fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea: though the waters thereof roar, and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof.

IX. A time of the church's distress and danger, is another fearing time, when it is especially proper to trust in God. What I mean by the church

* Judges v.——15. † Jeremiah xviii.——9, 10.

church now, is God's interest and kingdom in the world; or in this and the other part of it. If the being of this is endangered; if the prosperity of this is interupted; if this be in a low and sinking way; if the peace and tranquility of it be broken; if it be harrassed with persecution; or be like to be swallowed up by an inundation of wickedness and error; if the enemy in any degree and measure prevail against it; if it be driven into corners, so as to be scarse discernible; if open vision cease; or the church be driven into the wilderness, and the witnesses prophesy in sackcloth; I say, it is no wonder if such seasons be fearing times. Some, there may be, who may not care for any of these things, may not be at all moved or afflicted by or with them. But such as have any thing of a right spirit, of a truly excellent spirit, cannot but be impressed and affected; these will not forget Jerusalem, nor be heart whole, as it were, when such calamities overtake her. Eli like, they will tremble for the ark of God. Well, but where is our duty at such a time; not to be over much dejected; not to yield to despondency and despair; not to give up the cause for gone; not to conclude that the waters shall swallow up the man child; not to think that the seed of the serpent shall root out the seed of the woman. No, but to trust in God; in the great head and king

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of the church. His honour and glory are nearly concerned in the existence and preservation of the church, yea in its flourishing state and condition. His heart is set upon the church, and he watches over it continually, and will keep it night and day, "In the day of its prosperity, and in "the night of its adversity*." He has all the enemies of the church under his controul. He knows their malice and hatred. He sees into their intentions and schemes. He has his eye upon all their motions, and observes the progress they make. And as he sits above inspecting all their measures, so he laughs, as it were, at them, and has both their persons and their purposes in derision; and says of the latter, they shall not stand, neither shall they come to pass. "Upon this rock will I build my church, "and the gates of hell" i. e. the power and policy of satan and all his confederates "shall not prevail "against it†." Christ has paid dear for the church, and that among other things makes the church dear to him; as dear as the apple of the eye. He is, as it were, embarked in the same bottom with the church, therefore she cannot but be preserved. Do not you know, said Cæsar, to the ship's crew, when in imminent danger of being cast away, do not you know that you have

Cæsar

* Isaiah xxvii.——3. † Matthew xvi.——18.

Cæsar on board? With infinitely more propriety may such a speech be addressed to the church in the greatest storm, in the most perilous circumstances. Do not you know that you have Christ with you!

Melancthon was of a timorous spirit; Luther, his contemporary, of a very bold, courageous, turn of mind. When the reformation, which both had at heart, did not go on so successfully as they wished; especially when the papists were like to prevail, Melancthon was all fear. Upon which Luther used to observe to him, that he forgot God too much. That he took, as it were, God's work out of his hands, and thrust himself into his place; that, as the church was his, it was his place to take care of it, and that he would most undoubtedly do so. "God is in the midst of her; "she shall not be moved: God shall help her, "and that right early*."

X. To mention no more, a time of approaching death is, with many, a fearing time. "Through fear of death some are all their "lifetime subject to bondage†." I feel myself going, says the christian, death is approaching with hasty steps, and the prospect fills me with fear;

* Psalm xlvi.——5. † Hebrews ii.——15.

fear; I am ready to shudder when I think on the pains of death; and especially when I think on the consequences of death. I have heard from, and seen in others, that dying work is hard work. The waters of that Jordan how deep are they! And how sometimes do they rise, and toss, and swell. I am afraid even to set my foot in that river. I know that Christ tasted death for his people; that He has unstung that enemy; sanctified that dark, dismal, uncomfortable, passage. But I fear whether I belong to Christ or not; and so whether he has done this for me. Well, would you be delivered from, or helped against these fears, trust in God. He has been much better to many christians, as to this object of terror, than their fears; has carried them not only safely, but comfortably through death, so that they have scarce felt the pains, but have even smiled in the midst of it. "Yea, though I walk through the "valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil: "for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff "they comfort me*."

Thus of these fearing times, which ought to be trusting times.

Such is a time of conviction.

* Psalm xxiii.——4.

A time of desertion.
A time of temptation.
A time of extraordinary business.
A time of trouble and affliction.
A time of apprehended evil.
A time of extraordinary duties of religion.
A time of national trouble.
A time of the church's distress and danger.
A time of approaching death, or a dying time.

These are the times now in which it is especially proper to trust in God; and they reach most of those fearing times to which we are exposed and liable. But, should there be any other then what have been mentioned, still may you trust in God in that as well as in any of these. Yea there are no times whatever, but in them we may and ought to trust in God. "Trust in him at all times ye people*." In times of peace as well as times of trouble; in times of security as well as in times of danger; in times of prosperity as well as in times of adversity.

There are no times in and under which we do not stand in need of God. There are no times in which we shall not misbehave, yea miscarry, if we are not found trusting in God. Above all things then it behoves us to be trusting in God.

This

* Psalm lxii.——8.

This is to God's honour, and will be to our comfort. As it is our most incumbent duty, so it will be very much to our interest. This is a glory due to his name. It is not only what we are allowed, or have leave to do, but what we are enjoined and commanded; so that we sin and that greatly, if we do not trust in God. Fain would I suppose then, that you are at least desirous, very desirous to trust in God. And would you trust in God? why then seek to know him and to grow in the knowledge of him. God cannot be trusted in aright unless he be known; and the better he is known, the more easy will it be to trust in him. "They that know thy name will "put their trust in thee*." They that know thy name, that are persuaded of thy being, that see thy divine glory and majesty, that are acquainted with thy allsufficiency, that know Thee in the revelation of thy grace in the gospel.

Would you trust in God? make sure your interest in him. David encouraged himself in the Lord his God. See that you close with his covenant, and take him for your God.

Would you trust in God? why then, keep near to him. Be much in communion with him.

* Psalm ix.——10

Stand at a distance from sin, and be fruitful in every good word and work. Careless, loose, and uneven walking, will very much hinder trusting in God.

Remember the Providence of God, and his providential works and wonders. How he has appeared for his people in their manifold extremities and dangers. "O my God, my soul is cast down "within me: therefore will I remember thee from "the land of Jordan, and of the Hermonites, "from the hill Mizar*."

Be very conversant with the promises, and especially such as are made to those that do trust in God. "Blessed is that man that maketh the "Lord his trust†." "O Israel, trust thou in the "Lord; he is their help and their shield‡." i. e. the help and shield of those that trust in him. "They that trust in the Lord shall be as mount "Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth "for ever‖." "Thou wilt keep him in perfect "peace whose mind is stayed on thee; because he "trusteth in thee¶."

Look to the Holy Spirit as to beget and implant

* Psalm xlii.—6. † Psalm xl.—4. ‡ Psalm cxv.—9.
‖ Psalm cxxv.—1. ¶ Isaiah xxvi.—3.

plant this trust in God in you, so to preserve and strengthen it, and to call it up into exercise.

Finally, be much in prayer. Trust in God will ever shew itself by prayer. Trust in God at all times ye people, pour out your hearts before him, and hereby will it be greatly promoted. "I "sought the Lord and he heard me, and delivered "me from all my fears*." Amen.

* Psalm xxxiv.——4.

THE END.

10 FE 58